

man that I never thought about any exultant finales, for what exultation could there be? I think that it is clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. The rejoicing is forced, created under threat, as in [Mussorgsky's] *Boris Godunov*. It's as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, "Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing," and you rise, shaky, and go marching off, muttering, "Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing." What kind of apotheosis is that? You have to be a complete oaf not to hear that.'

Since then further hidden codes within the Fifth have been uncovered. David Rabinovich in his biography *Shostakovich, Composer*, pointed out the relevance of Shostakovich's only other serious composition of 1937, the *Four Pushkin Romances*, Opus 46. The first song, *Rebirth*, is quoted directly in the central quiet passage of the Fifth's Finale, with the lilting accompaniment in high strings referring to the final quatrain:

*Thus delusions fall off
My tormented soul
And it reveals to me visions
Of my former pure days.*

This perhaps suggests the composer's hope that one day the true message of the Fifth would be appreciated and show that Shostakovich had not betrayed his basic ideals.

The musicologist Gerard McBurney also pointed out in a talk on BBC Radio 3 in January 1993 that the march theme in the Finale is derived from the quatrain:

*A barbarian painter with his somnolent brush
Blackens the genius' painting,
Slapping over it senselessly
His own lawless picture.*

Following Stalin's savage *Pravda* condemnation, we do not need to think too hard about the identity of the 'barbarian painter' who besmirched his work.

More recently Stephen Johnson spoke on Radio 3's *Discovering Music* about his realization that the duet between flute and horn over gently-pulsing strings in the closing stages of the first movement echoes the *Habanera* from Act One of Bizet's *Carmen*. This is when Carmen sings of love as a rebellious bird who will not be tamed. Shostakovich may have been thinking about an unrequited love affair at the time or he may be referring to the final victory of love over oppression.

Undoubtedly, more codes in the Fifth will be revealed in the coming years but it is hard to think that we will ever fully understand all the cryptic references in his music which increased with the passage of time, culminating with his enigmatic Fifteenth Symphony in 1971.

From its earliest years, however, the Fifth was admired purely as a musical masterpiece and, whilst we might be horrified by the condemnation that Shostakovich experienced in 1936, there is no doubt that this did result in a thorough personal reflection on the future direction of the Symphony in Shostakovich's oeuvre.

It is difficult to think how he might have progressed following the Fourth Symphony without this period of enforced reflection and we can be reasonably sure that the subsequent 'simplification' of his musical language helped ensure his enduring popularity.

We can marvel at the purely musical mastery in the Fifth, how tender musical themes presented at the start of the first movement are transformed into brutal marches in the central development. His use of the orchestra remains distinctive, the brutality of the central section emphasized by the use of low braying horns, playing well out of their comfort zone.